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HOUSE APPROVES \$150,000 TO HELP NEWCOM INCREASE REGIONAL PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO INTEROPERABILITY

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) announced today that the U.S. House of Representatives has approved his request for \$150,000 in next year's budget to help the North East Wisconsin Public Safety Communications group (NEWCOM) improve regional public safety radio interoperability.

"Clear communications between our emergency responders can mean the difference between life and death," said Obey, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "So I'm glad the House approved my request for these funds to help NEWCOM improve the radio interoperability of our first responders."

NEWCOM is a cooperative partnership of 16 counties representing over 600,000 people, 14,500 square miles, and over 500 law enforcement groups, with the goal of establishing an interoperable public safety mobile radio system and mobile data system for the region. Oneida County leads the project, with Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Portage, Price, Taylor, and Wood Counties in the Seventh Congressional District and Florence, Forest, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Shawano, Vilas, and Waupaca Counties participating.

The federal funds are intended to help NEWCOM begin to implement its Public Safety Mobile Radio Interoperability Plan by linking two of the participating counties together by microwave links to enable full record and data transfer between the counties, as well as a full backup of the counties 911 dispatch systems. Funds will also be used to help purchase additional radios for public safety agencies in the NEWCOM region.

However, Obey noted that the Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Bill must still be approved by the Senate and signed by the President before it becomes law. "But having these funds included in the House passed bill means that a major hurdle has been cleared," he concluded.

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